

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—Cooper.



"WHAT'S THIS? WHY, IT'S MY BO'SUN'S MATE, MASTER."

THE COAST-GUARDMAN'S YARN.

SOME years ago I was in the habit of periodically visiting the little sea-port town of D—, and on the occasion of which I write, I was staying at that place for my accustomed fortnight.

The weather had been hot and sultry during the day, and now the heavy leaden clouds seemed to augur a coming storm. It appeared long in arriv-

ing, however, and I soon became tired of watching for it at the open window of the hotel; so I strolled forth to the beach, to have a closer look at the waves as they came steadily on until they finished their career, sprinkling the loose shingle with their white spray. Some time elapsed whilst I was thus pleasantly occupied, and still there was no storm; in fact, the heavens seemed, if anything, clearer, and a gentle breeze arose that promised to dispel

the threatening clouds. Absently, I kept drawing farther and farther away from shelter, until I was rewarded for my involuntary boldness by witnessing the gradual rise of a pale silvery moon, which cast her mellow light far over the restless sea. Truly the scene was beautiful in its wildness: on my right, stretching far beyond the sight of human eye, lay the mighty deep, not a sail, not a speck to disturb the grand and awful monotony of the vast expanse: on my left, the beetling rocks rose abruptly from their bed of shingle, whilst the flood of soft light that poured down upon all prominent points tended to throw the gaping clefts and fissures more deeply into the gloomy shade.

As I wandered on, wrapped in thoughtful wonder at the mighty hand of the Creator, that had so moulded the face of nature, I was startled by a harsh rough cough, proceeding from a dark nook, sheltered by a huge mass of overhanging rock; and immediately afterwards a hearty voice saluted me.

"Good night, yer honour! 'twill be fine arter all, I do believe. What! I startled you a bit, I'm afraid, sir. Yes, it *is* rather black in here; but you see it don't do for us to show ourselves too much."

As the speaker moved forward into the moonlight, I at once recognised an old acquaintance, one of the coast-guardmen. The latter fact was sufficiently proclaimed by the heavy cutlass hanging at his side, as well as the butts of a pair of enormous horse pistols protruding from the broad belt that encircled his rotund waist. A tarpaulin hat with a long flap, commonly called a "son'-wester," contained a round, bullet-shaped head, covered on the upper surface with curly pepper-and-salt coloured hair, and on the under, ditto with ditto. An oil-skin coat, thrown widely open, hung over his shoulders and back, and oil-skin continuations encased his nether man; in the corner of his mouth was stuck a short clay pipe, whose colour plainly told of long and frequent service rendered; under one arm was a telescope, the coast-guardman's inseparable companion; whilst in the other hand he held a piece of mechanism that I could not at all understand, and which considerably piqued my curiosity. It was a round piece of wood, some two feet in length, with a short cross-bar at one end, in the shape of the letter T. Taking his whole appearance, the man looked a "character," as we so often express it. As I before observed, he was no stranger to me, for I had made his acquaintance on a previous visit, and, being an amusing yarn-spinning fellow, I was glad to find him still quartered at the same station. Jack Rogers, or, as his mates more familiarly styled him, "Old Jack," was an old "man-of-war's man," as indeed most, if not all of the coast-guard are, and consequently had seen much of the world, and would relate many an amusing anecdote of other climes and scenes, nor was he ever loth to spinning his yarn; indeed, it was an evident pleasure to him to find an attentive listener.

Before many words had passed between us, (or rather, before he had spoken many, for as yet I had been unable to insert one edgewise,) he had

recognised me, and was pleased to express much pleasure at seeing me again; asked me where I had been, and what I had been doing in the year that had elapsed between my present and last visits; and, being satisfied on these and various other minor points, entered into a quiet kind of general conversation, as if he had said, "Good night, yer honour!" to me the very evening before, instead of twelve months back.

"Well, Rogers," said I, as we walked along the beach, picking our way among the sharp points of sunken rocks that the receding tide had now left exposed, "you're looking as well and hearty as ever, and don't seem to care anything more for weather than you used to do; but what is that thing you've got in your hand?"

"What's this? why, it's my night-glass, to be sure, sir," taking his telescope from under his arm. "Why, you're never so new as not to know that, sir!"

"No, no; of course I know that well enough; I'm not quite so stupid as that; but it's the other concern I mean—that wooden contrivance."

"Haw! haw! haw! well, that's my bo'sun's mate, master, and a good friend too, though not so good as the old bo'sun; that she isn't—oh dear, no."

I was completely puzzled, and I suppose looked so, for old Rogers again burst out into his hoarse laugh.

"Haw! haw! haw!"

"Well, my good fellow, you needn't laugh at me in that manner for not knowing all your odd tricks, I'm sure."

"Why, sir, I were a laughin' at myself, not at you; you see, so many peoples asked me the same question, that I begin to look upon it as a joke, like. But I'll set you right in a minute. As I said afore, that there's my bo'sun's mate. Haw! haw! and I'll just tell you why I calls it so. You remember my old dog Bo'sun, don't you?"

"Yes," I answered, "I remember him well, and was about to ask you where he is; I hope nothing has happened to him."

"No, sir, thank'ye, he's all right, and 'll be here afore very long now, I d'cessay; it must be getting on for ten o'clock, I should think; leas'tways, I begin to feel supperish. Well, he's the bo'sun, and this here's his mate; not so good a one as the old dog, though, as I was saying. I can get forty winks at odd times when he's along with me, but I can't manage it with this."

Here I cut him short: "Well, but I want to know *why* you call it so."

"Oh, ah! I forgot; why, sir, because when the dog's along with me I can take a nap quietly in any dark corner, and there's nothing stirs, nor there isn't a sail in the offing, but what he wakes me up at once; 'pipes the watch on deck,' as I calls it. But he's getting old, poor chap, now; so, when I can manage without him, I leave him at home, bring this here stool instead, and go without my nap. Then you know, sir, when I feel tired or want to smoke or anything, I lets it down on the point so, and sits on the cross-bar. As long as I keep awake it's very comfortable and easy; but I dursn't go to sleep, because as soon

as ever I begin to nod, I lose my balance, and over we goes together, bottom upwards."

It was now my turn to laugh heartily; for in describing all this to me, he had suited his actions to his words, and there he lay, most unexpectedly, flat on his back. Not the least discomfited, he was on his legs again in an instant, and seemed to enjoy the joke as much as I did. As we stood laughing together, he suddenly dived into an enormously long pocket, judging by the length of arm that disappeared, pulled out a fat old silver watch, whose face he consulted for about half a minute, and then turned hastily round in the direction of the town.

"What! is your time up already?" I asked, as I turned with him; "are you expecting to be relieved?"

"Yes, yer honour, of hunger and thirst for a bit, but not of duty; I've three hours to run yet. No, I'm only going back to meet Bo'sun, who'll be bringing me my supper, and I like to save him all I can."

Almost as he spoke, I noticed some black object moving towards us, which proved to be the dog, and, as Rogers had said, was bringing his master's supper neatly done up in a little basket, which he carried cleverly by the handle. The old man received him with an affectionate pat on the head, and a "thankye, old mate," which Bo'sun seemed fully to understand and appreciate; then he sat down on his rickety stool, the dog on the ground beside him, and amicably shared his meal with his humble trusty friend.

Whilst the two are thus employed, I may as well describe the lowlier though scarcely less intelligent animal. Poor Bo'sun was certainly no beauty, but he made up for that in his unwavering affection for his master. Ever watchful, ever obedient, ever anxious to please, he was useful almost beyond belief, but decidedly not ornamental. Rogers had taken him some years before, when a little puppy, from the wreck of a French brig; had reared, and made a constant companion of him ever since. What his genealogy was no one could tell, but certainly one branch of his family belonged to the poodle tribe: black as a coal, his hair curled in a close-fitting coat, covering eyes and everything, except four delicate-looking white feet; but his tail was the crowning point of his personal perfection; it was a round knob of hair, in shape like those which surmount the shakos of some of our infantry regiments; though, unlike the steadiness of the aforesaid balls, Bo'sun's tail was for ever going in a quick tremulous wag. Blind of one eye, when by chance you could get a glimpse of this feature, and with one leg lame and deformed, as if it had been broken and badly set, he was altogether as curious a specimen of the canine breed as one could meet with on a day's march. But in the eyes of his master, Bo'sun was perfect, and he was treated and spoken to by him more as a human being than as a quadruped.

It was not very long before these two friends had finished their meal. Rogers took up his little bottle of grog and offered it to me. I just sipped, by way of good fellowship, and handed it back; he nodded,

raised it to his lips, took two or three huge gulps, then turned it upside down, whilst he wiped his mouth on his sleeve; then, having carefully inserted the cork, he wrapped it in the cloth that had contained his food, and placed the basket in a crevice of the rock, ready to take home when his watch was over.

The night was beautifully clear, and the moon more softly brilliant than ever, so I determined to stay out and enjoy an extra cigar in the open air, which I could doubly appreciate after the close overpowering atmosphere of the past day, whilst I promised myself a yarn from old Rogers' locker of anecdotes. With this intention I drew out my case, and selected a havannah, then offered one to my companion, who thanked me, and without ceremony "put it in his pocket for a treat," as he said, quietly drew out his black pipe, knocked it clear of ashes on his thumb-nail, filled and lighted it, and, before speaking again, vigorously emitted great clouds of smoke that rendered him almost invisible. For some time we puffed and puffed away as if thinking of nothing else, but gradually we resumed our conversation.

"Now, Rogers," I said at length, "you promised last year to tell me how it was your poor dog's leg came to be that ungainly shape; and as you've had your supper and will be on duty for an hour or two to come, you may as well redeem your promise now, as I don't intend going home for ever so long this beautiful night."

"Well, sir, as you're so kind as to say you'd like to hear, I'll be glad to amuse you for a spell with my yarn, which at any rate has one merit, that of being true. But first and foremost, I'd better tell you a little of my old mate here, afore I come to the prime story as to how he and I came to be friends for life—as we mean to be, God willing; don't we, old man?"

The dog rose from his place, came and squatted himself down between his master's legs, and rested his shaggy head on his knee. I asked no more questions, and Rogers soon began his tale.

"You know all about how I came by him, I think, sir? I picked him up on the deck of a Frenchman that had been wrecked off the Point; the crew, poor fellows, had taken to the boats, and had all gone down, for there was no small craft except the life-boat that could have lived five minutes in such a sea. As, therefore, nobody was there to own him, I took possession and brought him home. This happened soon after I lost my wife, poor cretur; and the little girl as was left to me, used to play about and amuse herself with the puppy, and they soon got to be such good friends, that I resolved to keep the animal and rear it, and give him the number of our mess. Well, he grew and he grew till he was as big as he is now, and there he stopped, and all the feeding in the world wouldn't get another inch out of him; but if he didn't get any bigger, he soon became most audacious cunning; so I taught him his edication, and drilled him till he knew his duty well, and then I put him on the books as "Bo'sun A. B." He's uncommon useful to me, sir, and knows what I want afore I tell him a'most. He never makes a mistake; and if I were to send him home for any-

thing this moment, he'd bring the right 'un. My daughter, who, young as she is, keeps house for me now, knows all his ways, and easily understands what I've sent him for; nor he won't take it from her if it aint right—not he. They're just as good friends as ever, the girl and him, but she's only a very young thing yet, whilst he's old, poor chap, and not so fond of moving about as he used to be. However, sir, he's been out with me a'most every night as I've been on watch this eight years, and I hope he'll last a good long time yet, for he's treated well and taken much care of, honest chap. And now you know so far, I'll just tell you of that night when he got lamed so. I'll just have a look round, and be back again in no time: I won't keep you a minute."

With this he rose from his stool, and walked a few paces out to where he could get a good sea view, scanned the horizon narrowly with his glass, gave a look aloft, and again came and seated himself on his rickety contrivance.

"Now, sir," said he, "I'm brought to again, and I'll go on with my yarn. Lie down, mate, and make yourself easy; I aint a-going to move again for a bit, I dessay."

Bo'sun resumed his comfortable position, and Rogers proceeded.

"I was off duty one night in the autumn some five or six years ago, and had just had my supper and was thinking of turning in, when there was a knock at the door, and in walked our skipper.

"'Rogers,' says he, 'slip on your boots again; I want you.' You see, sir, I'd taken 'em off, and was a having a toast at the fire afore going to my hammock. Well, I slips 'em on again sharp, and gets ready to go out, for I knew by the skipper's manner that there was something in the wind.

"'Look to all your arms, and leave that cur of yours at home to-night; we musn't have a sound, and he might spoil all with his barking. Now look sharp, and get down to the boat-house as soon as you can.'

"'Ay, ay, sir!' says I; and off he sails.

"Well, I uncharged my pistols, and loaded 'em again carefully, stuck 'em in my belt, buckled on my cutlass, and ran up-stairs to give Mary a kiss and tell her I was ordered on duty, for she'd gone to bed poorly: she aint strong, sir, and never was. Having done that, and told her to be sure and go to sleep and not be worrying about me, I came down-stairs again and went to the door to go out. Uncommon anxious old Bo'sun was to go with me; but I dursn't take him for the life of me, so I shoved him back and locked the door, and went straight down to the boat-house ten knots an hour. There I found all our men mustered, and the skipper a-fidgeting about for all the world like a cockroach on a hot stove lid, as if he wanted to be off uncommon.

"'Now, lads,' says he, 'you're all here, so I'll tell you what you've got to do. I've heard from a source on which I can rely, that that blackguard Long Jim is going to run a cargo at the Point to-night, just opposite the Devil's Ladder;' (that's a pathway cut zig-zag up the face of the cliff, sir,) 'and I mean to have him at last: he doesn't dream

of any one knowing it, and thinks he'll do it quite easily. There will be rockets and signals going on about four miles to the eastward; take no notice of them, as it is only to draw us there whilst he does his business at the Point; but just do as I tell you, and come along.'

"With these words, out he boits, and we arter him. It was as dark as pitch almost, and there was a nasty drizzling rain, which made it altogether as uncomfortable a night as you'd wish to see; but, for all that, we were ready enough for the work we had in hand, for this fellow had baffled us several times, and we'd been more than once jeered at and chaffed about him. After a stiffish walk all along underneath the cliff, we came to the place named, and here the skipper gave us his orders in a whisper.

"'Now, then, how many are there of you?' Ten. Very good! You, and you, and you,' picking out three of us, 'go up to the third slant in the pathway, and gently too, so as not to make a sound. The rest, except Rogers and Humphrey, go round the Point and hide yourselves until you are called. You stay here, Humphrey, and when you have seen the blue light out at sea, run up and join the party on the pathway, and let them know: they can see nothing from their position, because of that high ledge of rock between them and the sea. Now, Rogers, sneak down among those great stones, until you get to the water's edge almost, where you can see the top of the cliff as well as out to sea; keep your weather eye open, mind, for very much will depend upon you. First of all, they'll show a blue light out there somewhere, which will be answered by a similar light on the heights. This will be done twice, and they will then land. Lie quiet until they have all passed your hiding-place and have set foot up the pathway; then return as quietly as you can, summon the men from the other side of the Point, and cut off their retreat: and, by-the-by, should the signal-man come down after showing his light, he must be stopped and secured, but without noise. Now, do you all clearly understand?'

"'Ay, ay, sir!' we answered.

"'Well, then, off to your posts; and remember, whatever you do, make no noise. I am going over to F—as fast as I can, to get the cutter out, in case anything should prevent the landing. So good night, lads.' And away he went as silently as a ghost."

[To be continued.]

LITERARY "PACKMEN."

THE profession of the pedlar, or travelling packman, has dwindled down to comparative insignificance since the days when pack-horses were an institution in this country. We have made most marvellous changes since then—from a plodding jade of a horse, or a whole train of them, laden with packed bags, nicely balanced on each side, and following a leader jingling with bells, at the rate of twenty miles a day, to a train of twenty or thirty baggage vans, each loaded with its six or seven tons, and following the

great iron horse at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour. And yet, vast as is the change, it has been accomplished in what, now that it is past, appears but a mere span of time. We can remember the pack-horse, pomegranates and all, very well, as we used to see him with his camel-like hunch of goods, in the days when we carried a green-baize satchel containing a duodecimo Lindley Murray, a Walkington's Arithmetic, a blotted Eton Grammar, and that dog's-eared square quarto Entick, etc., constituting our own pack, as, "with shining morning face," we crept "unwillingly to school."

In those days the pedlar's vocation was a thriving one, and we can well believe, though we never fell in with any such a phenomenon ourselves, that it may have contained within its ranks even such a man as Wordsworth has pictured in the first book of "The Excursion"—a man who, philosophizing on nature and humanity as he went plodding under his pack,

"Through hot and dusty ways or pelting storm,"

might, after a reasonable space of time, and while his energies were yet unsubdued, find that

"provision for his wants

Had been obtained,"

and be enabled to put in practice the very prudent resolution,

"To pass the remnant of his days, untask'd
With needless services, from hardship free."

But our business is not with pedlars and packmen in general, but with literary packmen; and we allude to the general pedlar only because, in the days we speak of, he was very much the medium by which such literature as penetrated the remote and secluded parts of the country found its way thither. In the hamlets, villages, and even the smaller market-towns of the country, there was no such a personage as a bookseller to be met with in the first years of the present century; nay, we could point to places which had their bi-weekly markets, and yet which, so late as the year 1820, were without their bibliopole. People resident in such districts, if they patronised literature at all, received it at the same hands which supplied them with linen and woollen goods, with ribbons and laces, and personal adornments; and the contents of a pedlar's pack often consisted fully as much of food for the mind as of gear for the body. That some of them were reading men, we happen to know, and know also that they had the wit to appreciate what they read. On the upper shelves of our bookcase there are yet the thumbed and tattered remnants of a small collection of the English Classics, bought five-and-thirty years ago or thereabouts of a travelling pedlar, who found us out in a lonely hamlet in Somersetshire, every one of which the vender had perused first himself, and could recommend to a customer.

These men were often but indifferent characters, and, for the sake of gain, would secretly circulate books of a depraved kind. We are inclined to think, however, that on the whole they did more good than harm, and cannot help entertaining a feeling of obligation towards them. Hugh Miller, in his "Autobiography," gives a humorous account of one of these worthies, which is worth

quoting. "There was," says he, "a vagabond pedlar, who travelled at this time the northern counties, widely known as Jack from Dover, but whose true name was Alexander Knox, who used to affirm that he was of the same family as the great Reformer. The pedlar himself was, however, no reformer. Once every six weeks or two months he got madly drunk, and not only 'perished the pack,' as he used to say, but sometimes got into prison to boot. There were, however, some kind relations in the south, who always set him up again; and Jack from Dover, after a fortnight of misery, used to appear with the ordinary bulk of merchandise at his back, and continue thriving until he again got drunk. He had a turn for buying and reading curious books, which, after mastering their contents, he always sold again; and he learned to bring them, when of a kind which no one else would purchase, to my mother, and recommend them as suitable for me. Poor Jack was always conscientious in his recommendations. I know not how he contrived to take the exact measure of my tastes in the matter, but suitable for me they invariably were; and, as his price rarely exceeded a shilling per volume, and sometimes fell below a sixpence, my mother always purchased, when she could, upon his judgment. I owed to his discrimination my first copy of 'Bacon's Wisdom of the Ancients, done into English by Sir Arthur Gorges,' and a book which I had long after occasion to refer to in my geological writings—Maillet's 'Tellamed,' one of the earlier treatises on the development hypothesis, and . . . 'Poems of Gawin Douglas and Will Dumbard,' and another collection of 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' from the MS. of George Bannatyne."

That some of the packmen who had a literary turn should abandon their linens and woollens, their ribbons, frippery, and trinkery, and take up solely with literary wares, was not to be wondered at. Thirty or forty years ago there were peculiar facilities for carrying on a profitable trade in book-hawking, and advantages connected with such a trade which no longer exist. In rural districts, as already mentioned, there were scarcely any book-sellers, and the hawker had the trade in his own hands; then books were always published at a high price, and bore a good profit; and the man who went into the market with ready money, as the pedlar was obliged to do, might make from thirty to forty per cent. increase of his capital in the regular course of business. The small editions of Walker's Classics, and subsequently of Dove's, were admirably adapted, both from their portability and the excellent judgment which had been shown in their selection, for this kind of commerce; and hundreds of thousands of them permeated the land among the pedlar's stock, and are to be found to this day in the remotest and most out-of-the-way districts, forming part and parcel of the domestic library. The men who followed this exclusive trade were mostly of the nomadic class, who had little relish for plodding the same route over and over again, and you rarely saw one of them a second time, save after a very long interval.

Quite a different specimen from the book-pedlar,

or hawker, was the touter of books in numbers. This man laid out a beat for himself, which he traversed weekly, or perhaps monthly; and his main object seems to have been to dig a big hole in your pocket "by force of numbers." Our recollections of this persevering genius are not half so pleasant as they might have been, had we turned a deaf ear to his seductions. We have indignant reminiscences of a certain "Cruden's Concordance," printed on a kind of stone-coloured tea paper, which cost us nearly four pounds sterling by the time it got wrapped in decent calf skin, but which, long before that time, was selling in the shops, in quite as good a garment, at twenty-eight shillings. We had paid the difference for the pleasure of having the work dribbled out weekly in blue paper covers, and we were but one of some thousand or so subscribers who had contributed, for about three years, to a "losing bank." Large fortunes were made by speculators in this sort of literature, during the first decades of the present century; and, looking to the margin of profit exhibited by the Concordance transaction, the fact is easily explained. Some huge monuments of the trade yet remain, in the shape of gigantic Bibles and voluminous illustrated histories, stored up among the penates of many a farmhouse and rural residence. The touter of books in numbers still survives; but he has undergone a change; the decrease in the money value of books of all kinds has cropped his large profits to something like average dimensions, and, having a better informed public to deal with, he must give the money's worth for the money.

The most characteristic literary hawker of the present day is the trash packman of London, and the suburbs, within five or six miles of St. Paul's. Nothing derogatory is signified by the word "trash," in connection with this subject; "trash" and "trash-shops" being merely technical trade terms, used to designate cheap serial literature, and the places where it is sold retail. The function of the trash packman is to supply innumerable small shopkeepers, who sell cheap literature, either as their staple article, or in connection with snuff and tobacco, with lollypops and sweetstuff, with toys and walking-sticks, with apples, oranges, and nuts, with red herrings and treacle, small beer and vinegar, with brass bracelets, brooches, rings, and Birmingham ware, or even with coals and potatoes. It is for his special convenience, though that fact is modestly kept in the background, that the cheap serials are issued so long before the nominal date of their publication; the cheaper they are, and the larger their circulation, the earlier do they issue from the press. Were they to come from the printer only on the eve of publication day, the packman would never be able to get them to the counters of his customers, who, for the most part, have themselves no connection with the publishing houses, and rely solely upon him for their supply. He is the most unwearied and punctual of purveyors; and in all weathers you may see him pelting along on his route, laden with the ponderous reams and quires which melt away gradually as he continues his circuit from shop to shop. His

wares are far more various and manifold than the general reader is aware. Besides those journals which are well known and extensively popular, he has a catalogue of others, altogether as obscure and ephemeral, the first numbers of which are generally given away, or added, as a bonus, to some other periodical, with a view to secure a welcome reception for the numbers which are to follow. These are mostly of the melo-dramatic, demonological, or stirring and startling class of narratives—speculations which as often fail as remunerate their originators, but which, spite of all failures, are constantly springing up in some form or other.

The remuneration of this industrious disseminator of the cheap literature of the day is not, we imagine, very large; and it is rather a mystery how he is remunerated at all, seeing that he sells at five-and-twenty per cent. under the published price, and therefore must exist himself on that meagre margin—whatever it may be, for we confess our inability to define it—which is expressed by such terms as quirage, dozenage, per-centage, etc. Perhaps he supplements his wholesale transactions by a small independent trade in retail, which he is able to carry on concurrently with his larger operations, and along the same beat.

The reader will perceive that literary packmen may be very useful agents, circulating sound sense and good instruction; or, on the contrary, they may be perambulating nuisances, carrying infection into the moral atmosphere wherever they go. The tendencies of the times are, however, happily in favour of their being beneficially employed, and it behoves every man who yields a pen to see that, so far as he himself is concerned, they are so.

THE CALCUTTA MALL.

At last the golden orb of day, after his brilliant career across the azure vault of heaven, and after

"Hurling fierce splendour through the sultry air,"

betakes himself to his gorgeous crimson bed across the Hooghly. The fact is physically announced to me by the perception of a gradual mitigation in the heat as I lie recumbent, divested of all but the airiest of habiliments, attempting to snatch a brief forty winks to brace up my energies for the coming visit to the Calcutta Mall. But still more practically is the event of closing day made significant by the silent entry of my sable valet, who proceeds to business by opening the venetians, and letting a flood of light into my hitherto darkened chamber; he then arranges my wardrobe, and, after certain manual telegraphic signals from the window, to summon the water-carrier to give me a bath, formally announces that everything is ready. My valet is resolute: any attempt to court still further slumber would be absurd. As the water-carrier enters the bath-room, I rouse myself, and emerging from the precincts of the musquito-curtains, enjoy the luxury of the huge skinful of freshly-drawn cool water that is poured over me; I then rapidly perform my toilette, under the joint administrations

of my valet and his mate, and descend to the door, where I find my sparkling proud little Arab fretting with impatience to carry me to the scene of confusion and of conquest.

I have my habitation in Chowringhee, the Belgravia of Calcutta; and, mounting my Saladin, (whose saltatory proceedings evince a salutary efflux for a superabundance of mercurial humours, and whose eccentric fancies are somewhat opposed to the long enjoyment of the cooling effects of the bath,) I am borne along by a series of initiatory bounds, and at last reach the Chowringhee Road, which skirts the broad green plain that lies around the celebrated Fort William. The sun is rapidly sinking, while from every road and street, highway and gully, Calcutta is disgorging herself of her population.

An hour ago, the roads were bare strips of heated earth, devoid of life, until the water-carriers sprung forth from their hidden haunts, and, scattering the grateful fluid around, laid the dust, and gave a sensation of pleasant coolness to a panting populace. Now, as if by magic, impelled by one spontaneous desire "to eat the air," as is the oriental figurative designation, all the world and his wife emerge from their muggy dwellings, be they humble or palatial, and make straight for the strand. Here are the governors, the princes, the great men and the mighty men, the captains, the high church dignitaries, cotton lords and merchant princes, high and low, the European and the indigenous, the white man and the black, with a somewhat imposing preponderance of that medium tint which claims affinity to each, sallying forth, and one and all directing their course to the appointed Mall, with a seeming spirit of determination that nothing could dispel.

Away they go! equestrians, male and female, making for the bright green velvet sward that so gladdens the eye of the visitor to the city of palaces, whether from sea or up country. There are equipages of every form and build, from the disjointed, rattling chariot of oriental cast, to the graceful phaeton of English build. Here is the primitive "kranchee," which in aspect can only be likened to a hackney carriage of the days of good Queen Bess; but, in place of an unwieldy ponderosity, exhibiting a fragile combination of particles whose right of cohesion for five consecutive minutes would disconcert the brain of any philosopher—a reticulated compilation devoid of paint and springs, and drawn by two ponies that are yoked at a precautionary distance from each other, in true oriental fashion. It is loaded with a freight of holiday-making "bāboos," who have chartered it in the black town, and are now sallying forth to behold the pale faces of the western world. Here go palankeen carriages innumerable, principally loaded with the discoloured community, the Eurasians of the City of Palaces, who adopt European customs to the utmost, and who sedulously attend the Mall; the gentler, if not the fairer sex, habited in the whitest of muslin dresses, and with their dark Eastern eyes laying themselves out to captivate the heart of a Gonsalvez, a Silvester, or a De Cruz, who prance along on their well-spurred steeds.

Then there are the palankeen carriages with the sedate but demi-tinted merchants, who have forsaken the buggy, and whose carriages, calling daily for them at their offices, when business closes, jog leisurely along to the general rendezvous. Here are more-stylish ones, drawn by a pair of horses, and with a driver habited in the disguise of an English coachman of the old school, by a fraudulent desire to give the character of a great-coat with a great many capes, but wearing a single cape adorned with a series of horizontal stripes. The horse-keepers sport livery turbans and belts; the horses trot at considerable speed under their plated harness; the varnish is very bright, the blinds are let down, and there sits the well-pleased owner, in his white jacket and with bare head, his sable wife, in the most brilliant of yellow and pea-green bonnets, beside him, enjoying themselves to the very uttermost.

But the palankeen carriages are outnumbered by the more purse-accommodating buggy, which swarms in every stage of splendour and decay. Here is the venerable trap that has seen some fifty summers, with its lofty old-fashioned body, and with an eccentric excrescence protruding from the hinder panel for the stowage of umbrellas and canes, with its straight shafts and normal hood, designed for protection from a sun ever at the meridian, up to the graceful and elegant half-side-sweep turnout, with its low body and roomy amplitude, court-ing repose, and looking the very picture of a luxurious vehicle. Look, there goes one of these modern vehicles, with not a straight line in the design to affect the æsthetic taste; everywhere is the curved line of beauty, with perfections of finish and a startling dash in style. See how noiselessly it rolls along, drawn by that fast trotting waler; and impelled by the hand of the young civilian or staff officer, whose occasional glance at the vacant seat beside him speaks volumes to those recently imported maidens whose idiosyncrasies are for the marriageable state. Not less "swell" are the buggies of the merchant princes, their partners or assistants; but they are more frequently of a more practical kind of beauty, with higher wheels, and cane panels, for the sake of lightness.

Then we come to the crush of pilentums, barouches, sociables, phaetons, and the other thousand and one species of four-wheeled vehicle that is to be met with on this cosmopolitan course. There is the Governor-General, in his open barouche drawn by four horses, and with scarlet-liveried postilions, outriders, and military escort; there are the governors and high officials in their dashing equipages, drawn by imported English horses, or, when the vehicles are smaller and lighter, by the more sparkling and attractive Arabians; here are the affluent native princes, who, while adhering to their native costume, have dropped into the western customs in the matter of stylish and luxurious equipages; but great are the anomalies that they exhibit—jewelled velvet robes and embroidered garments, with the most fashionable and costly vehicle that money could produce, set off by a bevy of dissolute tag-rag and bob-tail, in squalid attire, clustering on every side.

And now let us take a more leisurely survey of the Mall itself. Passing the Ochterlony Monument and the Government House, the Town Hall and all the palatial edifices that run from the banks of the Hooghly to Chowringhee, we come to the strand which skirts the river's now golden waters. Here is the Hyde Park of the East. Have we not our drive by the Serpentine, where, in place of the Liliputian cutters, are thousands of stately ships, not only princely merchantmen of frigate build, the pride of Great Britain, the admiration of the world, but real frigates, and vessels that bear the flags of a hundred nations? And how tempting do they look, those stately ships, in all the glory of the brightest paint and formidable array of imaginary ports, with the tautest of rigging, and snowy awnings, to tempt the old Indian exile to become one of the "homeward-bound." There, on the left, is Hyde Park, bereft of its stately forest trees; but have we not the varying green ramparts and parapets of the mighty fortress, with its formidable array of guns, guarded by the British sentinel? Have we not the drive, more especially devoted to equipages, but which flirtation-bent equestrians love to invade? And is there not a "Rotten Row" for fair riders, and the broad expanse of brilliant sward for the fleet hoofs of the Arab, the Australian, the thorough-bred English, and the Cape? And, lastly, have we not our band-stand, where, on so many nights in the week, the votaries of the Mall, even as they take their drive, are regaled with the melodies of a Bellini, a Labitsky, or a Strauss?

Now, let us make a pause, and have an eye to the eccentricities of the scene. We have seen how grandeur and elegance drive side by side with unassuming lowliness; now let us see how Orientalism adapts itself to Western customs. Let us watch the equipages, as they whirl and dash along, taking it for granted that those which have now subsided in the "ambulative sequence" are tolerably free from adventures.

On the Calcutta Mall the art of driving is of strictly defined limits, for in the oriental mind the popular notion is to go ahead, be it to the right hand or to the left, irrespective of all collateral contingencies—a fallacy inordinately provocative of grief, and a source of much profit to the coach-builder and horse-dealer. Thus, a mild Hindoo, whose vaulting ambition never soared to any other capacity than that of cutting grass, has been elevated to the grade of a horsekeeper, when his master, instituting a trap, and on economy bent, has exalted him still higher—to the vehicle's wool-sack; and there, invested with a whip and intrusted with the ribbons, he is directed to take "a drive on the Mall," which is achieved, or otherwise, with an eccentric irregularity quite alarming to behold.

But if the land Oriental is fertile in woe, what would be the Calcutta Mall without its decimating and destructive British tar? What so effective to clear the way as the coming of a buggy full of jovial seamen, bent on a land cruise, affording a pleasing episode of every evening's entertainment during the cold-weather months, when the river is full of shipping? Here comes a specimen. Jack has chartered a buggy, and his crew, as he quaintly tells you be-

fore starting, consists of "three Europeans and one Lascar;" the latter, instead of having a berth aft, is made to sit on the jib-boom, as Jack designates the shaft, so that he may keep a good lookout for squalls, as he feels he has some intricate navigation before him, and he reckons on a stiffish breeze and perhaps a wreck before dark. They get under weigh, and, cracking along under full sail, make straight for the Mall, with a sincere and laudable desire to steer clear of all craft, as "port," "starboard," "keep her helm up," and such-like ejaculatory exclamations from the "master," who, with crossed legs and well-smoked clay, directs the navigation, can amply testify. But the helmsman, with his rudder-lines run slack to a most unprofessional extent, is deaf to all entreaties. He has just run down a water-carrier, fouled a "kranchee," capsizing it most effectually, and has now carried away the paddle (as he terms the wheel) of a family-laden palankeen carriage, shivering many a spoke, tilting the vehicle, and terrifying the minds of the occupants thereof. But Jack goes ahead; he claps on fresh sail, as he terms the application of the whip, and makes straight for a little palankeen carriage, bearing a portly Parsee. But the driver is an experienced "old whip," and his tiny pair of swiftly-trotting Pegu ponies soon escape from the danger. A civilian's barouche is next endangered; but we see no more, for Jack sails out of sight; but we feel convinced that a crisis will occur, and that the Lascar will be left to carry home the fragments.

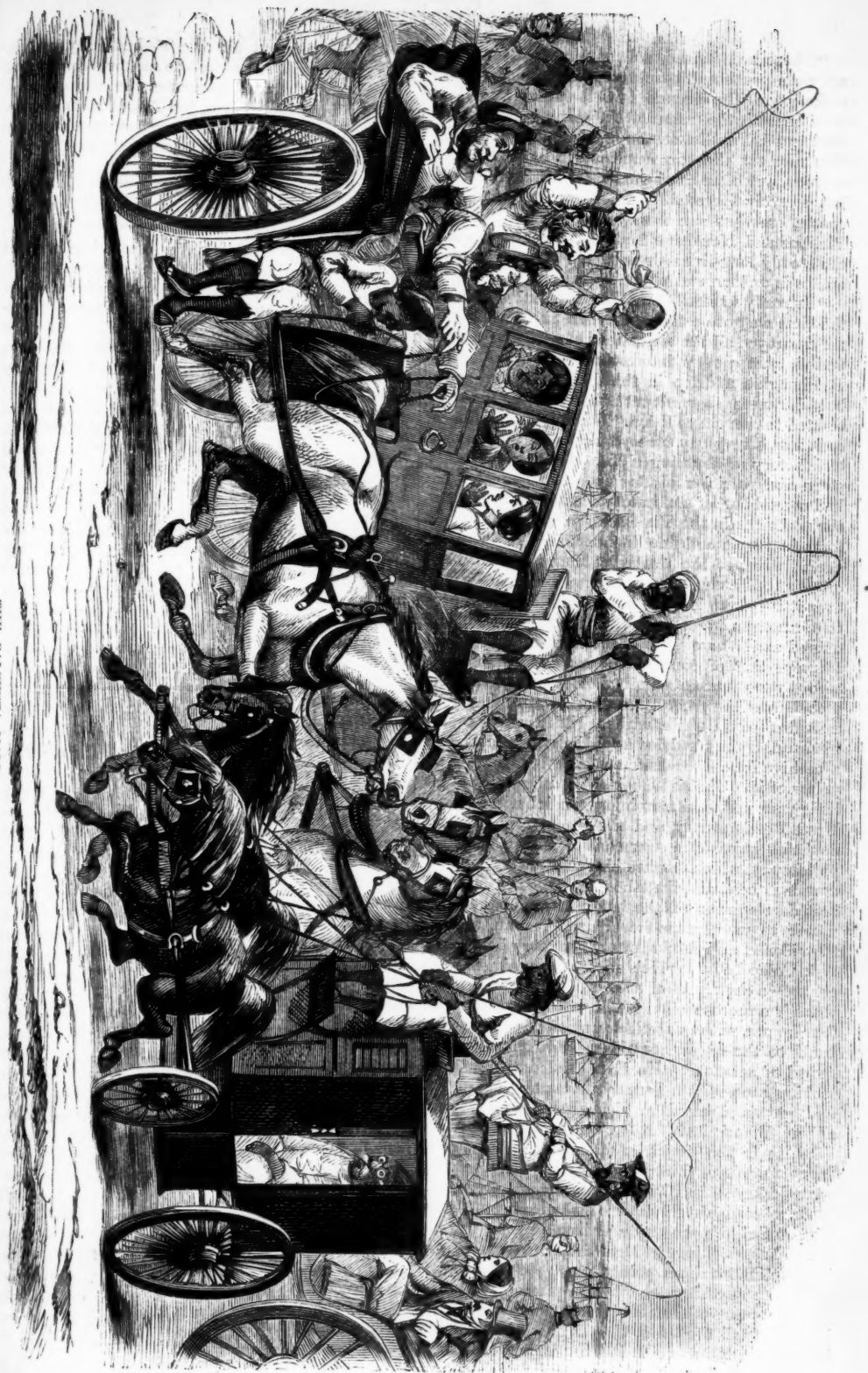
Thus is the air eaten on the Calcutta Mall. The majority veer homewards before it gets quite dark; but the more fashionable linger about the band till the royal anthem gives warning to horse-keepers to light the lamps, when the crowd disperses, and nought is heard on the Calcutta Mall but the howl of the jackal, or the even more hideous howl of the perambulating watchmen of the night.

Dr. Russell in his "Diary," published since the foregoing description was written, gives his first impressions of this strange scene.

"When it was getting dark, D— came round for me in his buggy, to perform the great ceremony of Calcutta life—to take the evening turn on the Esplanade, or the Course. The Esplanade lies in front of Chowringhee, and it is therefore in front of the Club. In the midst, on the right of us, is a bad imitation of the Nelson monument, in Trafalgar Square, with Nelson removed from the top. Before us is the Fort.

"Is this a limbo in which all races, black and white, are doing penance on the outside of strange quadrupeds and in the interior of impossible vehicles? The ride in Rotten Row, the dreary promenade by the banks of the unsavoury Serpentine, the weary gaiety of the Champs Elysées, the Bois de Boulogne, and the Avenue de St. Cloud, the profound austerity of the Prater, are haunts of frivolous, reckless, indecorous, loud-laughing Momus and all his nymphs—Euphrosyne, and Phryne, and others—compared with this deadly *promenade à cheval à pied*, where you expect every moment to hear the Dead March in Saul, or to see the waving black ostrich plumes sprout out of a carriage top.

THE CALCUTTA MALL.



"These are, indeed, solemn processions, which not even youth and beauty, or their simulants, can make gay. The ground is well watered; no dust rises beneath the tramp of the many horses. But darkness has set in on the faces of the multitude. The moment the sun made a decided bow to the horizon, out came carriages, phaetons, and horses; but scarcely have they revolved twice in their course, ere that sun has vanished into darkness. Phœbus and Nox have here a sterile union; and the sturdy long-lived Crespuscule of our southern climes is unborn and unknown here.

"It really was little more than ten minutes from the time we got on the Course, ere the darkness to me destroyed all the attractions of what, for a brief period, was a very interesting and novel scene. But imagine a drive in the dark—not twilight—but darkness so profound that lamps must be lighted to prevent collision. For the ten minutes or so it was a very gay, a very curious, but not a very satisfactory or assuring sight. I think the most stern and patrician of Roman consuls must have had something of an uneasy feeling when he saw the plebeians in the Via Sacra, presuming to walk forth in purple and fine linen among the offspring and relatives of the Conscrip Fathers. But here on this esplanade, or race-course, or corso—whatever it is—there is something more than such pretentious equality. It is, that there is such insult offered as the arrogance of the most offensive aristocracy—that of complexion—can invent to those who by no means admit themselves to be the plebeians of the race. See, there is a feeble young man dressed in white, with a gilded velvet cap in his hand, trying to drive a vehicle, which looks like a beehive from the cluster of his attendants on all points of it. That is Chuck-el-head Doss, the great little young Bengal merchant, the inheritor of old Head Doss's money, and the acceptor of the less doubtful gain of a Germano-Hindoo-Christian philosophy, which teaches him that, after all, whatever is best, and that the use of the senses is the best development of the inner man. Is he a bit nearer to us because he abjures Vishnu, accepts Providence, and thinks our avatar very beautiful? Ask 'Who he is.' 'He's one of those nigger merchants—a cheeky set of fellows, all of them.' Then there is a morose old man in a chariot drawn by four horses, with two well-dressed fellows with their backs to the horses, outriders and runners, and a crowd of servants. He is a handsome worn-out-looking man, with a keen eye, lemon-coloured face and gloves, dressed in rich shawls and curious silks. Who is he? A few Europeans bow to him.

"He is the Rajah of Chose—a great rascal. None of us know him; and they say the Company were jockeyed in giving him such an allowance. You feel some historic interest when you are shown Tippoo Sultan's son and grandson; but your friend is too busy looking at Mrs. Jones, to give much information on these points, or to direct your attention to anything so common-place (to him) as the appearance of some natives on the Course. And indeed, to tell the truth, the fair face of Mrs. Jones is, perhaps, better worth looking at, in the abstract, than those bedizened natives. Still it is striking,

for the first time at all events—but I suppose the impression soon dies away—to see the metaphysical Mahratta ditch which separates the white people, not only from the natives, but from the Eurasians. They drive and ride in the same throng, apparently quite unconscious of each others' presence."

WILD AND TAME.

THE influence of civilization upon man is chronicled in the records of history; but the influence of civilization upon certain races of animals is more obscure, and has not been taken cognizance of perhaps so much as it deserves. We all of us know something about the civilization of individual pets: it is not to that case, however, that I direct my remarks. What my observations would especially point to here is the series of gradual and more occult changes which have been brought about in the course of hundreds, sometimes thousands of years, and by virtue of which the characteristics of a race are so modified that we lose all cognizance of the wild progenitors from which the members of it have descended. Already the domestic cat has afforded the readers of "The Leisure Hour" one example of what is meant to be conveyed. Another case of similar import is furnished by the dog. Less obscure, but still well marked, are the cases of modified race, the change due to civilization, furnished by the pig, the sheep, the cow, and, perhaps more than all, the domestic barn-door fowl.

There are two ways of testing this no less difficult than interesting subject. Firstly, in some cases, historical records exist of what the characteristics of certain animals were, in ancient times when the process of reclaiming them first began; secondly, the naturalist has it often in his power to appeal to modern records, of what tame animals have become when allowed once more to run wild. Both these means of investigation are open to us, as respects the common barn-door fowl: suppose, then, we examine them. When barn-door cocks and hens began to be so inconsiderate as to abandon their native forests, and, for the sake of a little good living, to lay eggs and get fat for the benefit of their civilized but gormandizing protector, is more than naturalists, at this late period of the world's history, are able to determine; however, as regards those pioneers of civilization, the Greeks, testimony enables the inquirer to form a pretty accurate guess. In neither the "Iliad" nor the "Odyssey" does old Homer say anything about cocks and hens, which is strange, if he really was cognizant of their existence. Getting up of mornings by times to mingle in the fray, as the Homeric heroes are represented to have done, what more natural than the assumption that cock-crow should have been the signal. Neither does Hesiod (another very old Greek author) say anything about them; but, in addition to the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," Homer is the reputed author of another poem, the "Batrachomyomachia." At any rate, whoever the author of it, that poem with a long

name is a very old composition. In it domestic fowls are mentioned.

Next we take a long jump indeed—from Homer and Hesiod to Varro, who wrote about forty-five years before Christ. He gives us some very detailed and particular statements about the cocks and hens of his time; but they are statements so apparently at variance with what the preconceptions of a modern would lead him to, that, were the particulars not established by later observations, made in a very particular way, one might be excused for not believing the Roman historian. Fowls, both wild and tame, were known, according to Varro, in the Roman poultry market of his time. "Wild fowl," he says, "are rare at Rome, being seldom met with except in cages. They do not crow," he proceeds to remark, "nor do they resemble domestic fowls in appearance, but approach nearer to the African bird."* Many other particulars respecting these wild fowls does Varro narrate; but the reader will probably have begun to suspect that, by no possibility could a wild bird, having the characteristics of form as described by Varro, get modified by civilization into an ordinary cock or hen. Yet, curiously enough, the strange testimony of Varro has been confirmed in a very satisfactory manner; the evidence being as follows.

In the year 1842, Captain William Allen led one of those fatal explorations up the Niger, which cast a blight on the memory of that ill-fated region. The expedition proved mortal to about half those who took part in it; and the survivors were reduced to an almost unexampled condition of suffering and prostration. In order to recruit their strength, the survivors were ordered to the isles of Ascension and St. Helena; but, happening on their way to touch the little volcanic island of Annabono, in the Gulf of Guinea, they not only found a plentiful stock of good poultry, but became acquainted with a fact of great interest to the naturalist; confirming, as it does, the statements handed down by Varro. According to the testimony of the natives of the little volcanic island, at a period some twenty years before the advent of Captain Allen, a few cocks and hens, escaping from an English ship, took to the woods, and, finding circumstances congenial to their natures, multiplied exceedingly. Now, twenty years is no long time, apparently, to work out changes in the organization of a race; but, strange to say, it was a period long enough to have degraded (if the term be permitted me) once civilized English barn-door fowls back to the level and the characteristics of the wild fowls described by Varro. Not only had the cocks ceased to crow, having adopted a cry of their own, but, in form as well as colour, the ordinary type of common barn-door fowls had become widely departed from. Fortunately, and to place the testimony beyond any reasonable doubt, Captain Allen and his surviving associates were accompanied by a naturalist.

In this way Varro and Captain Allen between them undoubtedly prove the strutting chanticleers and clucking hens, who go pecking away in modern farm-yards, to trace their pedigree back to the wild

fowl common enough in the forests of Bengal. This, indeed, is just the pedigree naturalists had made out for them; but so apparently profound are the differences between the form and colour of the two, to say nothing about the fact of tame cocks crowing, and the inability of wild cocks to perform the vocal feat, that ordinary people might have been held excused for not implicitly believing the statements of the naturalists.

And here, writing about the vocal powers of civilized chanticleer, it strikes me as a curious circumstance that he should learn his song in captivity, and that he should forget that accomplishment when consigned to the woods again. Not less curious is it, as well as a matter of precisely similar import, that the barking of dogs is also a language of civilization. The wild dogs of Australia never bark; the half reclaimed dogs of Constantinople do not excel in that line; and, as for the progeny of tame dogs allowed to run wild, they soon lose their barking power altogether. A dog, however, I may here remark, seldom runs wild if he can help it. To the majority of animals which man reclains, making them companions of his steps, and denizens of his fields and home, civilization is a lot chequered to them with good and evil. If the horse, wild running in Tartarian steppes, be innocent of bruised oats and bran mashies, physic when he is out of sorts, a stable-roof over his head, and currying o' mornings; so he escapes a large per contra of equine troubles lain athwart his shoulders, and upon his convenient back, by the perhaps too exacting biped. Then, woe to the civilized bird or beast, good to be cooked and eaten! Dogs, I think, have a particularly happy lot of it. To them the change from savage to civilized life brings with it few or no disagreeables—save, perhaps, when fate may have cast their lot amongst natives of that central flowery land where puppies are held in culinary repute.

Some of the most interesting changes which time and wildness have wrought out upon animal races are perceptible in the American continent. I need hardly remark that, before the Spaniards set their conquerors' feet upon American soil, horses, goats, pigs, dogs, sheep, and a few other animals, were strangers to that continent. Of these, I believe the dog alone has never totally escaped from man's fellowship and congenial domination. As regards that other companion of man, scarcely less intimate than the dog—the horse, of course, I mean—it is far otherwise. Hundreds of thousands of horses, totally wild, roam at this time over the pampas and llanos of both North and South America. The soil and climate of America are probably no less congenial to the horse than those extensive plains in Central Asia from which the equine race is supposed to have ramified. Probably the wild American horse has all the characteristics of the originally wild stock; therefore, any peculiarity of type recognisable in the one, we may expect to be recognisable in the other. Well, what facts does testimony supply in this matter? We will see. Don Felix Azara, I believe, was the first to notice the circumstance that, amongst these wild American horses, there is hardly a black, a grey, piebald, or sorrel-

* Known to us moderns as the Guinea-fowl, or pintada.

coloured individual to be seen. They all present the uniform type of brown short hair and black manes and tails. So far as the testimony of the naturalist just mentioned goes, the presumption is indicated that brown, with black manes and tails, was the colour of original wild horses—the very colour stated by Pallas as belonging to wild horses of the Tartarian steppes.

The American descendants of tame pigs run wild illustrate, in their own personal characteristics, the mutation of type which an animal species may experience. Not only have the wilding porkers lost their slow slouching gait, and become veritable wild beasts of the forest—that might have been expected—but their colour is invariably black, and their ears, instead of being pendulous, as is the case of tame pigs, prick up and stand well forward. Whilst grunter was a denizen of the farm-yard, with no enemy to fear save the butcher (whom he never learned to fear), and having no care for his dinner, a state of blunt hearing was of no particular disadvantage to him. Far otherwise is it with a wild forest pig, having to shift for himself the best way he can, and to whom the ability to hear quickly, and to remain wide awake, is a matter of the utmost consequence. To such a pig, prick-up ears are a sort of necessity, and accordingly God has supplied them.

America presents sheep and bullocks for the naturalist's investigation, under the somewhat rare and very interesting condition of neither quite wild nor quite tame. In them the mutation of race in passing from civilized back to savage life is not wrought out, but is yet in a state of transition. Before more specially pointing out what has happened to both these races, I would just in passing direct the reader's attention to a series of animals of the sheep tribe, the skins of which are stuffed and preserved in the zoological department of the British Museum. Without particularizing the animals in question by the hard names which naturalists apply to them, it will be enough for my purpose if the reader observe that certain sheepy-looking animals are there to be seen—sheep-like in form, face, horns, and, in short, everything save the one characteristic of wool. Glancing now the mental eye far away from the stuffed skins of the British Museum, and contemplating all the solicitudes of which sheep are the objects, by reason of their fleece—considering how those warm coats of theirs have to be bathed, anointed, and otherwise cared for to prevent ill results—a question might arise of the following kind. How would a wild sheep manage with no kind shepherd at hand to see to the wool toilette? On this point the half wild sheep of America furnish an instructive lesson. Their lambs have wool like any civilized lambs, and the wool continues growing for a period: but mark now the curious result. If the shearer comes before a certain period, and shears the fleece, well and good: another fleece begins to grow, lengthening to maturity. If, however, the shearer so far neglects this operation that a certain time, a little too long, elapses, off falls the wool of its own accord, a crop of hair takes its place, and wool never grows on the hairy part again.

What can be more beautiful than this illustration of the way in which the Almighty modifies the characteristics of a race in favour of mankind? The young lamb with woolly fleece would seem to say mutely, and once for all, "Wild or tame? which is it to be? Take your choice, but choose at once."

Passing now from sheep to cows, just contemplate the enormous quantity of cows' milk consumed by human beings, and how freely cows supply it. But this facility of milk-yielding is a characteristic impressed on the species after many centuries of contact with humanity. The half-wild cows of America yield milk indeed, for their own progeny, but they have very little to spare besides. Neither the Spaniards at home, nor the descendants of Spaniards abroad, are much of a milk-loving people; but whenever a travelling milk-lover wanders amidst the half-wild cows of certain parts of America, he finds it no easy matter to get a little cows' milk. The animals have lost the function of continuous supply. To finish our account of tame animals run wild in America, I may remark that only the goat and the donkey have grown handsomer for the change which has come over their fortunes. As to the goat, his head has become smaller and his eye brighter; and, who would have thought it?—the wild donkey actually seeks out the wild horse to do battle with, fighting, I am bound to say, most treacherously—the very reverse of all that is noble and chivalresque—but, for the most part, successfully. In short, the wild donkey seems to be a fellow of more intelligence than the wild horse, but at the same time more treacherous, resentful, and unforgiving.

RIFLE SHOOTING IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

THE importance now attached to rifle shooting in this country, as one of the principal elements of its future defence, may render interesting some information concerning it, as practised both in the Old World and the New.

Switzerland is one of the earliest countries in Europe in which the rifle has been popularly used, and the mountain republic has acquired a reputation on this point, worthy of the land of Tell. The bold burghers who sustained that intrepid assertor of his country's liberties, have been succeeded by men who wield the rifle with the same ability with which their forefathers bent the bow; and in these days, when the redoubted shaft has been superseded by the more deadly shot, equal attention is devoted towards maintaining the national renown. All the youth of the Helvetic Republic are early trained to arms. Even at school they are subjected to strict military drill; and we cannot refrain from here adding that, in so far as our observation has extended—and it has been tolerably extensive—the continental system of military drill, which expands the chest and renders the figure erect and manly, would prove a truly valuable supplement to our insular sports—cricket, foot-ball, etc., which have a tendency to round the shoulders and mar the gait. Physically, we are the first people in Europe—per-

haps in the world; but though these sports are calculated to render the limbs strong, they are less suited for insuring the equable development of the whole body, and moreover labour under the disadvantage of being wholly useless, apart from healthy amusement; whereas the other, to almost the last day of our existence, qualifies us to discharge the duties required for the defence of our country. We do not think it necessary to quote glorious old Homer's glowing lines on this head—though he has alluded to it in terms which, even in those days of mere utilitarianism, posterity, we trust, will never willingly let die—as the passage is doubtless familiar to all our classic readers, and the thought naturally occurs to every human breast. But, we may add, it is at present as necessary to keep the sentiment in view as it ever was in the days of ancient Greece.

The Tyrolese riflemen, we need not say, have long been celebrated. Some of the Germans, too, possess considerable ability in the use of the weapon; and at their great national *fête*, the Turnverein, in the New World, they keep up the exercise for several days once a year with great spirit.

The French may at present be considered the principal rifle shots on the continent; but the practice is confined chiefly to the army, though some divisions of this—especially the *Tirailleurs* (or riflemen) of Vincennes—have acquired extraordinary proficiency, not only with their weapons but also with their limbs. We remember seeing a regiment of these little fellows—they are generally small, broad-chested men—running in from Vincennes (a distance of four miles from Paris) at an *émeute*, or threatened insurrection, in 1849, all the way side by side with a regiment of dragoons at full trot, and arriving on the Boulevards in perfect trim.

But the Americans are undoubtedly the first rifle-shots in the world. There, every man is by statute trained to arms, as, even in cities, they have only the alternative of being firemen; and these, too, are so imbued with the national spirit, that they voluntarily arm themselves and have their target-shooting excursions also. Even long antecedent to the period when they are constrained to discharge their national duties by law, they resort to the practice of their own accord. The little fellows in Missouri and "fighting Kentucky," at nine or ten years of age, are sent out by their fathers with rifles to shoot the wild turkeys, which there so abound, and we have seen them soundly whipped on returning home, if they brought down the bird by any other than a shot through the head. Generally, after an incredibly short period of practice, they contrive to strike the head fairly off in a majority of the shots.

In America, we may mention, the militia, throughout the whole Union, are obliged by law to assemble four weeks throughout the year for the purpose of drill. Sometimes the period is subdivided into two or four parts, but in all it is imperative; and while they are thus in camp, or under drill, the utmost discipline prevails. The old nonsense about American militiamen—such as three out of every half-dozen turning to the right, while the other wheeled to the left, and the master threatening the

man, or the creditor the debtor, about the payment of some bill, if he unduly disciplined—is now wholly obsolete, if indeed it were not always entirely fabulous. We have seen regiments of these men, especially the New York National Guards and "Boston Tigers," not inferior in discipline to any body of regular troops in Europe; and so completely were they under control, that the former, named also the Seventh Regiment, unhesitatingly, on receiving the word of command from the Recorder of New York, fired on their own countrymen, and, after bringing at least a dozen of them down, charged the others with the bayonet, during the miserable riot which occurred on the last visit of Mr. Macready to America.

The uniform, we may add, of this highly effective regiment is gray, but we are inclined to prefer that of the firemen of New York for service in the field, if the necessity should ever unhappily arise. It consists simply of a red flannel shirt, with dark-coloured trousers, tucked within the boots, like Lord Elcho's Knickerbockers, and is a remarkably handy dress for active service. It realizes, in fact, the celebrated life-guard'sman, Shaw's *beau idéal* of battle trim—namely, dispensing with all bucklers and upper attire, and fighting only in shirt-sleeves. Red also, though somewhat of a conspicuous mark, is exceedingly useful for concealing the usual indications of any of those accidents which invariably befall troops in action, and are apt at first to produce a disagreeable effect upon unaccustomed men. The new felt hat, or sombrero, turned up on the right side, recently adopted by the United States army, might also be studied with advantage, it being very handy for sunny or sloppy weather.

Independently, however, of the regularly established national drills, so general is the martial spirit of America, that almost every city, every village, every newspaper-office and extensive private, commercial, or manufacturing establishment, has its own individual military company; and each of these goes forth frequently to drill, as well as contends, at least once a-year, for prizes at target-shooting. A sonorous band of music generally precedes these civic heroes on this occasion, and a huge negro brings up the rear with a large target, which is invariably brought home handsomelyiddled. Truth compels us to add that the B'hoys on these occasions often return home with every indication of having been indulging in some fluid more potent than water; but they elect their own officers with a spirit of discernment which should induce the gallant nobleman, whose name we have already twice mentioned, to persist in his very excellent motion, that all volunteer corps should retain this privilege; and the journeyman or apprentice, if his superior alacrity or intelligence should have elevated him to this post, frequently issues the word of command to his foreman or "boss," in tones and with a promptitude which is implicitly obeyed, and is amusing enough.

Some of the private shooting exploits in America are almost incredible. The southern and western men in this respect generally excel. In Ohio, which is much infested by squirrels, what is termed "barking" takes place; that is, the riflemen set

out, and the animals, crouching so close upon the branches as to be almost invisible, the game is destroyed by hitting the bark of the tree beneath them, and thus causing them first to start high into the air and then fall upon the ground, killed by the shock, so that the skin is not injured by the ball. In California, bears in the valley below are frequently destroyed by the hunter high up on the mountain firing his piece aloft, whence it descends so unerringly and with such force (the momentum increasing with the height it attains) that the animal beneath is generally destroyed at a blow. In Acapulco, on the western coast of Mexico, a similar plan is resorted to for the purpose of destroying turtle at sea; but an arrow on these occasions is the weapon, and it generally proceeds from the hands of the fair sex, who, moreover, take the precaution of attaching a string to it, for the purpose of hauling their prize ashore.

A one-armed hero of Massachusetts, Tim Smith, was undoubtedly one of the greatest wonders in the way of shooting we ever encountered in America. It is rarely that the northern men, more devoted to intellectual and money-making pursuits, thus excel; but Tim was positively a gem. Fortune, however, had not smiled upon him, as, in spite of the classic *dictum* we were taught at school, she frequently refuses to smile upon the brave; and we deeply commiserated poor Tim's lot in being constrained, when considerably past the meridian of life, to set forth to California, where every man goes about armed with a brace of revolvers, as well as bowie-knife, and requires also a brace of ready or stalwart arms to use them. Tim, it affords us satisfaction to add, confined himself to peaceful pursuits and eventually realized a fortune in San Francisco.

But the most renowned shot in America is Captain John Travis, of New Orleans. The feats of the Captain are positively marvellous. He will lay a rifle at his feet, pick it up in an instant, and bring down a pigeon or swallow on the wing. He will allow himself to be blindfolded, turn round, and, with revolver, ring the bell each time. The Captain has more than once beautifully removed an apple from our palm at twenty paces; and we grieve to say, when we think it might have spoilt or entirely precluded this article, had there been the slightest trepidation on our part, he gracefully removed one with his rifle, at the distance of fifty yards, when poised in air between our thumb and forefinger.* The Captain, moreover, good-naturedly offered, in like manner, and with like immunity, to remove a peach from the summit of our head at a hundred yards; but we respectfully begged to decline the handsome proffer, though we have

no doubt he would have accomplished this feat with equal dexterity.

The Captain, we may add, has since established one of his shooting galleries in the Quaker city of Philadelphia, on Adams Street, between Main and Second; and it is probably the finest establishment of the kind, not only in the United States, but in the world. The rifle galleries are 70 feet in length, 10 in width, and 17 in height; the pistol galleries the same height and width, and 36 feet in length. There are also galleries and reception-rooms for ladies.

In conclusion, we beg to express a hope that the movement recently instituted in England will not be transitory. We wholly dissent from the opinions of those cynical military martinets and absurd parliamentary *saltimbanques*, who decry the volunteer force, and maintain the superiority of an army enlisted from the lowest and most illiterate portion of the people. The experience of all ages proves the reverse. The triumphs of ancient Greece and Rome were not gained by the *canaille*, but by the free citizens and agriculturists of higher rank, who carried the standard of their country to victory wherever it was unfurled. The people of England are in no degree degenerate. When we say England, we include Scotland; and the natives of either are yet the first people in the world, or, at all events, second to none whomsoever. The spirit which at present inflames their breasts is as glowing as any that ever illumined the hills of Rome or the plains of Greece. They are superior far to the plebs of Rome or the dregs of Athens; and we have no fear for Old Albion, so long as her flag shall be upheld by the hands of freemen.

It would be an error, we may add, in a matter intended to be wholly practical, to occupy too much time in undue attention to drill. Drill is indeed highly advantageous. It expands the body, and gives promptitude as well as precision to the mind. At a recent important public meeting in the metropolis, we were especially struck by the remarks of the venerable provost of Eton, Dr. Hawtrey, concerning its beneficial effects upon the boys of that renowned school; and we may add that, for the sake of promoting unity of action, we concur in his recommendation of a slight and inexpensive uniform too. We were also particularly impressed, as well as amused, by the information of the chairman, Lord Elcho (himself the crack colonel of the crack Scottish regiment,) that, so general has drill now become that, at a Quaker school in Yorkshire, the young ladies went through the whole of the military manoeuvres, though they had substituted other terms for the phraseology of the soldier, all with the exception of the word *halt*, which there was no possibility for the ingenuity of even the Society of Friends to supplant. Wellington, too, declared that "Eton won Waterloo;" meaning that the manly habits there acquired by the flower of England's youth had engendered that vigour of body, promptitude of action, and lofty spirit, which on that ever-memorable day struck the great Napoleon down. But while fully approving of early drill, and acquiescing with all the important speakers at this meeting, that the system should be rendered

* On venturing to hint to the writer of the present communication, that some would consider this rifle experiment "foolhardy," he said that the risk was small—certainly so small as not to be taken into account by him under the circumstances; for had he declined the Captain's proposal, the American bystanders would have at once made some insulting remark about Britishers being cowards. In the life of General Sir Charles Napier, there is an account of still more perilous experiments to which the generous and brave old soldier submitted at the request of an Indian swordsmen.

national in our schools, we cannot but express a hope that undue time will not be lost in teaching it to adult rifle corps now organized. A few movements are indeed indispensable to teach them to act in unison; but the Americans at New Orleans, who, from behind their cotton-bags, brought the choicest troops of England down, were, for the most part, men ignorant even of the mysteries of "the goose step."

HOT ROLLS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

It would destroy many a fine-set morning appetite if the breakfast reflected on the iniquities which have been perpetrated in order to furnish his breakfast table. His sugar comes associated with memories of slavery, and perhaps the reality of it; and, as for hot rolls, they must have involved a slavery more intolerable in some respects than that which has oppressed the negro. The black slave at least has his night hours of rest; and, speaking of the Cuba slaves of to-day, Mr. Trollope testifies to the good treatment of them considered as mere animals.

The London baker is less happily situated. For him there is scarcely any night rest. Roam through London streets in the still hours, when every other artisan is refreshing himself with slumber, and you shall still perceive a dim fitful light glimmering through the bar-work of some dismal kneading-house. Look down, and you shall behold spectre-like objects almost naked, mixing the dough with many a thump and thwack, preparatory to its being made up in form to go into the oven. The housewife who kneads the materials of a cottage loaf cannot realize to herself the hard work which falls to the lot of the poor baker. I have spoken of their working by night, but the case is even worse. In London, as also in some of the larger provincial towns, the bakers' journeymen have to work day and night. On Sunday, for example, they begin work at 11 P.M. and continue it until four next morning. Then, instead of retiring to rest, a new day's work, so to speak, begins: they have to shoulder the heavy bread-basket, and supply their masters' customers. Up to Thursday, all days and nights are alike to these poor men, when matters, instead of mending, get worse, especially in the underselling shops, where, in a large number of cases, the men have to work continuously from 11 P.M. till late on the Saturday afternoon, making no less than forty hours' labour at a stretch; moreover, in most situations, the men have to attend on Sunday from about 10 A.M. till 2 P.M. to superintend the dinner bakings. Adding up the hours of these periods of labour, it will be found that a large proportion of bakers' journeymen are employed weekly for the most incredible period of 112 hours, an average of more than eighteen hours per day out of the twenty-four. The consequences of this barbarous servitude physically might readily be inferred, even were they not seen in the wan and withered aspect of bakers' workmen. Dr. Guy stated, in the course of a recent lecture, that he never found a baker's workman in what might be called robust health; that is to say, with healthy, florid complexion. Only 14 in the

100 had a tolerably healthy appearance; and out of 111 bakers, 48 had more or less severe diseases of the lungs and chest.

Of course, I need hardly say that religious observance of Sunday is quite impossible under these severe conditions. Those of the bakers' journeymen who go to church or chapel only go to sleep; they simply cannot help it.

Why should there be all this iniquity? Why cannot dough be kneaded and bread be baked in the day time? There seems no necessity why the baker's avocation should remain one of the most unhealthy. Reader, you individually have it, probably, in your own power to contribute to the redress of this great wrong. It is brought about chiefly by the love of hot rolls for breakfast. Now, hot rolls for breakfast can only come of dough kneaded and bread baked whilst you were in bed asleep. Nay, think about this yourself, and take care that your friends and neighbours think about it. What man, woman, or child, having a sentiment of human feeling in their composition, to say nothing of Christian charity, would knowingly and wilfully condemn a section of their fellow creatures to worse than negro bondage, for the sake of a hot roll? With this appeal I will be content. It would be an insult almost, to aim at carrying a point of benevolent justice by adverting to the unhealthiness of hot bread. Rest assured, however, that it is unhealthy; on this matter all medical men are agreed. Those who court dyspepsia, with heartburn, headache, skin eruptions, and a train of troubles, will find a most efficient health-disturber in the use of hot rolls.

I find, from a pamphlet written by Mr. Lilwall, that there are from ten to twelve thousand journeymen bakers in London alone, who are exposed to the bakehouse night-work and its destructive consequences. "Heads of families," Mr. Lilwall advises, "should make it a point of conscience to ascertain which of the master bakers in their respective districts have abolished night-work, and give them their patronage, that they may not be pecuniary sufferers by their kindness to their men. They will have no difficulty in obtaining this information from the journeyman who daily delivers their bread. In those cases—and they will be the large majority—where they find that the baker they respectively patronize adheres to the old system, they will be doing an act of real humanity by telling him they are resolved after a given period—say a month from that date—to get their bread from a baker who relieves his men as far as possible from oppressive night-work." It was remarked by the Earl of Shaftesbury, in presiding at a meeting at Exeter Hall, that "the heaviest amount of over-work would not be found at the west-end of London, but in the east, and in districts chiefly inhabited by working men." Let the working classes understand that, when indulging in the thriftless and unwholesome luxury of hot bread, they are imposing on their brethren that extra amount of toil, and let them consider whether they could not give up that selfish indulgence, bearing in mind the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

VARIETIES.

A MISCHIEVOUS PARROT.—One day a party of ladies paid us a visit aboard, and several had been hoisted on deck by the usual means of a "whip" on the mainyard. The chair had descended for another "whip," but scarcely had its fair freight been lifted out of the boat alongside, than the unlucky parrot piped, "Let go!" The order being instantly obeyed, the unfortunate lady, instead of being comfortably seated on deck, as had been those who preceded her, was soused overhead in the sea.—*Lord Dundonald's Autobiography.*

THE ARABS OF THE DESERT.—Many of our readers will be hardly prepared for the extraordinary intelligence that a Scotsman has been chosen by the Arabs as their Prince. Mr. Brown, a missionary at Aleppo, thus writes: "Yesterday our esteemed consul, Mr. Skene, called on me, and very earnestly asked me to aid him in seeking the good of the wandering tribes of the Arabs of the desert, which approaches this city. For two or three years his philanthropic interest in them has been deepened by frequent visits to their encampments. He has been a mediator between the wild tribes and the Turkish government, protecting them from injuries, and holding them back from war and predatory retaliation. His influence among them has become so great, that he was recently formally elected by them as their Emir, Prince of all the Arabs. Nor is this an empty title. He has tested his power in various ways; e. g. by ordering the restitution of thirty camels, which they had just taken from a caravan. They were sent back at once to their owners, and the plunderers were punished in his presence, by being deprived of their horses. He has so far overcome their strongest hereditary prejudices, as to persuade one of the tribes to commence cultivating the soil, which they have been accustomed to consider a great degradation."

MENDING CRACKED BELLS.—At a recent meeting at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Mr. S. A. Varley exhibited a Cracked Bell, the metallic continuity of which had been restored by simply soldering the crack with tin, so that the bell rang as perfectly as before it was injured. It was explained that tin had the property, when heated above its melting point to nearly a red-heat, of rapidly dissolving copper. If, therefore, the cracked bell, after being soldered, was kept at a dull red-heat, or nearly so, for a little time, the crack would become filled up with an alloy of tin and copper, of nearly the same kind of composition as the bell itself, and in absolute metallic union with it, and quite as brittle and as sonorous as the other portions of the bell.

VENTILATION IN THE SICK ROOM.—With a proper supply of windows, and a proper supply of fuel in open fire-places, fresh air is comparatively easy to secure when your patient or patients are in bed. Never be afraid of open windows then. People don't catch cold in bed. This is a popular fallacy. With proper bed-clothes and hot-bottles, if necessary, you can always keep a patient warm in bed, and well ventilate him at the same time.—*Florence Nightingale on Nursing.*

INCREASE OF STEAM NAVIGATION.—The steam vessels owned in the United Kingdom now constitute one-tenth of the entire mercantile tonnage, and if the river steamers are added, they form a still larger proportion. While the sailing tonnage registered in 1858, as compared with that registered in 1859, exhibits only an increase of 30 per cent., the steam tonnage registered in the same year shows an advance of 264 per cent.; and, moreover, one steam vessel performs the work of at least four sailing craft. The total number of steamers owned and registered in the United Kingdom, exclusive of the colonies, on the 1st of January, 1859, was 1854. London stood, as might be expected, at the head of the list, having a fleet of 510 steamers, of 282,403 collective tonnage, and 68,951 horse power. The importance of steam transport to the metropolis might be estimated by the fact, that the declared net value of the exports of the produce of the

United Kingdom from the port of London, in 1858, was 29 millions. Rather more than one-half of the whole of the customs' duties was collected in London. There are in the United Kingdom and colonies, at the present time, 2239 steamers, of 488,415 gross tonnage, and other commercial countries are fast availing themselves also of steam power for their shipping.

THE INVENTOR OF GUN-BOATS.—Some years ago, when the Duke of Wellington was staying at Tedworth, Mr. Smith communicated to the great Captain his notions respecting gun-boats. The Duke listened, as he always did, with attention to the squire's remarks, but gave no opinion at the time respecting the subject of them. Next morning, as they were both walking on the terrace after breakfast, the Duke said, "Smith, I have been thinking that there is a good deal in what you said last night about those gun-boats, and I should advise your writing to the First Lord of the Admiralty," then Lord —, which Mr. Smith accordingly did, but received no answer. Some time after, when walking down Regent Street, he met the First Lord, whom he knew personally, and asked him, in the course of conversation, if he had received his letter containing suggestions for the introduction of gun-boats. The First Lord replied that he had, but that the Admiralty could not pay attention to all the recommendations made to them. Upon this, Mr. Smith took off his hat, and, turning away from him with a stately bow, observed, "What his Grace the Duke of Wellington has considered worthy of attention, I think your Lordship might at least have condescended to notice." Yet, within ten years from this interview, one fleet of our formidable "vixen craft" is at sea, and another is being fitted out for service.—*Reminiscences of Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq., by Sir T. E. Eardley Wilmot, Bart.*

THE THOUGHTLESSNESS OF WORLDLY MEN.—"Often, while in the full enjoyment of all that this world could bestow, my conscience told me that, in the true sense of the word, I was not a Christian. I laughed, I sang, I was apparently gay and happy; but the thought would steal across me—what madness is all this, to continue easy in a state in which a sudden call out of the world would consign me to everlasting misery, and that when eternal happiness was within my grasp."—*William Wilberforce.*

"THE MIRAGE OF LIFE."—"I have been amused by a book being sent to me by some man at Bombay as I came through. I did not know him, but I suppose he thought I was unhappy at giving up a high command. Poor man, he little knew how glad I was! However, he had my thanks, and his book has been read through. It is called 'The Mirage of Life.' All that he writes, I know as well as he does, and probably have thought about much more. People think that men bred in war have no ideas of religion or philosophy, unless they are full of cant. It never comes into their heads that we soldiers, knowing we may be snuffed out at any moment, think of 'what then?' This Mirage is printed by the Religious Tract Society, and is very good in its way: it just puts in print the words of Solomon, 'All is vanity!'—*Sir Charles Napier, October 28th, 1851. (Life, vol. iv, p. 333.)*

HINT TO PUBLISHERS.—It would be a considerable convenience, now that the "book-post" is so extensively used, if publishers were to cause the weight of a book or other publication to be printed on its title page. Perhaps with books this could not generally be done in throwing off the impression; but an adhesive printed label, to be affixed to the inside of the cover by the binder, would answer the purpose. In the case of periodicals, such as newspapers, reviews, and magazines, as well as in that of pamphlets, where no binding follows, to render the weight uncertain, the matter is more simple. The weight might be specified in ounces, as, "two ounces," "five ounces;" and if more than one copy of the print comes within the minimum rate of postage, thus—"Two, three, or four copies"—as the case may be—"under quarter of a pound."